

THE SPARK GAP

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MID-STATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

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OCTOBER 2004

M.A.R.C ANNUAL PICNIC

It's that time of year again for the MARC annual picnic at Johnson county park. It will be held at the Yellow Buckeye shelter house located on School House Road in Johnson County Park. The meat will be furnished by the club and members are encouraged to bring their favorite dish to share with the ones attending. The newly elected officers will be sworn in at that time and take office for the 2004-2005 year.

Please come and a good time will be had by all that attend. Talk-in will be on the 146.835 (pl. 151.4) if you need directions or get off course.

-N9SIU

From the President

As I write this, I'm jumping the gun somewhat. In less than two weeks I'll be handing the treasurer duties over to Brenda and ...gulp... displacing Jerry on the presidential hot seat. I thank you all for the confidence, and in particular I thank Jerry for what he's done for us the last two years. And now: what are the plans?

I have *so many* plans that I need to cut them down a bit. Let's talk priorities instead. Here are my priorities for the club:

- 1) We need to keep and increase the fun in the club, and in Amateur Radio.
- 2) We need to maintain and enhance our ability to serve our community as needed.
- 3) We need more active hams and more members.

These priorities overlap and reinforce each other. Lots of go-getters get lots of things done. Doing parades, street fairs, and the occasional Skywarn net is fun, gives us more visibility, and provides a selling point for getting more people interested as we show what ham radio can do for *them*. Regrettably, the opposite is true, also--the less you do the less fun you will have, the less you will help or can help the community, and the less attractive Amateur Radio becomes to anyone near you ready for something new, interesting, or useful.

So: think about ways we can push these priorities. Tell me. Tell other officers.

Tell other members. Do things. If the club is a vehicle with which we do Amateur Radio, you people are the fuel, the motor, the tires, the body, and for the next year I'm the nut behind the wheel. Let's see where we can go, and let's enjoy the trip.

73, KB9SKI

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Building Strong Relationships Builds a Strong Club

By Norm Fusaro, W3IZ

ARRL Affiliated Club/Mentor Program Manager

October 3, 2004

Amateur Radio is all about people. Building strong relationships is the foundation for the success of the [Anchorage Amateur Radio Club](#). This club, that has almost 300 members, is always asking the question, "What can we do for you?"

One of the first things that they do for all new hams in the area is to offer them a free one year full membership in the club. This "try it before you buy it" approach has not only helped boost membership but it creates an environment where people know that they are wanted not for their dues money but for what they can offer to the community, both as a ham and as a person. According to Club President, Jim Larsen, AL7FS, "You need volunteers for any program or it will die." He attributes this win-win attitude to the strong relations that the club has with the community as well as within Anchorage's business and political circles.



Club President Jim Larsen, AL7FS, mans the club information tent at the Alaska State Fair.

The club's influence extends beyond the Anchorage area as they have also been able to help their neighbors build reliable repeater systems. Both the Fairbanks Arctic Amateur Radio Club and the Juneau Amateur Radio Clubs have received support from AARC on their repeater systems. These systems are just a part of the Amateur Radio network that is always ready to provide reliable communications throughout the state whenever the need arises. Working closely with neighboring clubs allows Alaskan hams to provide communications over a large area without conflict or confusion. Like the other clubs, the Anchorage ARC, participates in and supports many community events including the famous [Iditarod dog sled race](#) which runs over 1000 miles across the lower part of the state from Anchorage to Nome. AARC is involved in community events from January to October.

The club owns and operates a VHF/UHF cross-linked repeater high atop Mount Susitna that has tremendous coverage over the Anchorage area. The repeater was installed on the 4300 foot peak with the help of a helicopter and it took three trips to get all of the equipment and personnel to the site. They are planning to install the Grubstake

repeater in November 2004. This VHF/UHF machine will be over 4800 feet above sea level.



Judi Ramage, WL7DX shows off some Amateur Radio equipment used in emergency communications.

These repeater systems, along with HF radios and a well equipped Command Control Vehicle, allows the club to be ready for any type of [emergency communications](#).

The very impressive Command Control Vehicle is a converted motor-home that has HF, VHF, UHF, satellite, GMRS, FRS, packet, aircraft, marine, trunking radio for State and local, CB and scanners. A perfect compliment to the CCV is not one but two trailers that are equipped with a 40 foot tower and a 12KW diesel generator. Antennas include HF beams and wire antennas, push-up masts and VHF/UHF verticals or beams.

The CCV is used for Field Day and other drills and at public service events. Most recently the club had a display at the Alaska State Fair where they entertained more than 400 visitors to the booth. "People were very interested in Amateur Radio and what we do.", said Jim. "A lot of people inquired about getting or renewing their ham licenses." The club really pitched in and manned the booth for 12 hours each of the 12 days that the event was held. In addition to answering questions about ham radio the special event station that operated during the entire fair logged over 1600 contacts from hams in all fifty states and from 64 countries.

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from ARRL WebPage.

MANY THANKS

Many thanks for those that helped with the Greenwood Marching Band Invitational and the Bargersville Festival . To those that helped on such a long day words can not express your sacrifice the hours you donated to two worthy causes. Both events helped promote Ham Radio and the public got a chance to see our great hobby up close and personal. Any time our club members and their friends can show the public what Ham radio can do it is time well spent. The Greenwood Band Parents can not say enough on the job we do for them during their event.

BARGERSVILLE FUN FEST

The Bargersville Family Fun Fest was just that. Fun! Seizing an opportunity to share our interests in Amateur Radio several club members set up camp at the festival so we could talk about the benefits of being an Amateur Radio Operator.

Ernest-KB9SKI brought a tent and his HF gear. Matt-KB9UJE brought a table and chairs. Jack-W8ISH provided the APRS station while Brenda-KC9EBL brought an HT and a great smile. Our base of operation was along Main street overlooking the kiddie rides, craft tables and food booths. Ernest and Jack quickly set up a portable dual band antenna and base station. They strung the HF dipole antenna between two telephone poles so Ernest could tune in the world.

As the morning wore on we were joined by a vendor with a tornado shelter on wheels on one side and the National Guard on the other. The guard recruiting group came up from Camp Atterbury to recruit a few good men and women. Thanks to them or maybe it was thanks to us, we both shared a lot of foot traffic. As the day worn on it actually turned into a little bit of a competition to see who's display got the most interest.

The sounds of the Hurricane Net could be heard coming from Ernest's HF rig. When the kids got closer he turned on the charm of his Morse code key and began sending out CQ. Most of the kids liked hearing and spelling their names in code.

Next door the reserves from Camp Atterbury used a jazzed up Humvee to lure people into their tent. They offered free weapons training and all expenses paid to the middle east. We offered free classes on amateur radio rules, regulations and operating procedures. They talked homeland security. We talked public service and disaster communications. Their Humvee had a compass. Our display had GPS and APRS. They talked tactics and maneuvers. We talked VHF and code. The entire morning turned into a war of words. Both groups vying for the interest of festival goers. They were an Army of One. We were an Army of four. Somehow we still felt out gunned.

Looking back our troop of amateurs had a good time talking with lots of interested kids and parents. We might have even recruited a few good folks into amateur radio.

At the end of the day we packed up our radios and headed northeast for traffic duty at Greenwood High School. The Army headed back to Camp Atterbury to train more troops for the war on terrorism. And the man with the tornado shelter on wheels drove off into the sunset hoping to sell someone on his idea of burying a pre-cast fiberglass storm shelter in someones back yard. He described the shelter as being suitable for storms and other explosive disasters. -w8ish

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Jack, W8ISH and Brenda, KC9EBL in Bargersville.



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WX Service Open House for Hams

The Indianapolis Office of the National Weather Service is holding a special Open House for Amateur Radio SKYWARN Spotters and their immediate families, in recognition of your contributions during this years severe weather season and in special recognition of the May 30th event where nearly 600 amateurs participated.

This special Open House will occur on October 16th, 2004 from 11am-3pm and will be held at the Indianapolis NWS office located at 6700 W. Hanna Ave, just south of the Indpls International Airport.

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Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets at 0800 EST the third Saturday of each month at the Johnson County Law Enforcement Center in the Emergency Operations Center. All hams are encouraged to attend this meeting and VE testing is held January through November after the meeting has ended.

MARC operates the 146.835 MHz (151.4 PL) repeater and all hams are welcome to use it.

For more information please visit our club web page at: <http://www.midstatehams.org>